

Washington, DC - Working with Republican and Democratic members of the Education and Workforce Committee, 12th District Congressman John Barrow today successfully added a provision into the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 2005 that will create new funding opportunities for early college high schools - small schools that help at-risk and low income students finish high school and prepare for college.

“This amendment will help to improve college graduation rates by applying the same wisdom that underlies successful programs such as Head Start - by better preparing high school students for college,” Rep. Barrow said at today’s full Committee hearing. “This legislation will prove critical in helping give low income and disadvantaged students the resources and support they need to stay the course, complete high school, and get a college education.”

Early college high schools are small schools specifically geared towards helping low-income students and former high school dropouts achieve a high school diploma and get a head start on college by earning two years of college credit. Currently, there are 46 early college high schools serving 8,030 students in 19 states, including Georgia.

Rep. Barrow’s amendment will make it possible for early college high school programs to apply for grants under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, or FIPSE.

Statistics from the education and workforce partnership *Jobs for the Future* show that over half of those qualified to get into college are not able to get a degree. In fact, one-third never even make it to their sophomore year. The disparity among minority students is even more alarming. While 28% of white students complete a four-year degree by age 29, only 16 percent of African Americans and just 11 percent of Hispanics complete a four-year college degree by age 29. Early college high school programs can help close the gap.

A member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, Barrow cosponsored the amendment with Republican Congressman Patrick Tiberi of Ohio. After the final version of the bill is voted out of committee later today, it will be considered by the full House of Representatives later this year.

For more information on Early College High Schools, log onto: <http://www.earlycolleges.org/> .
For more information the FIPSE program, visit:
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/index.html>

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